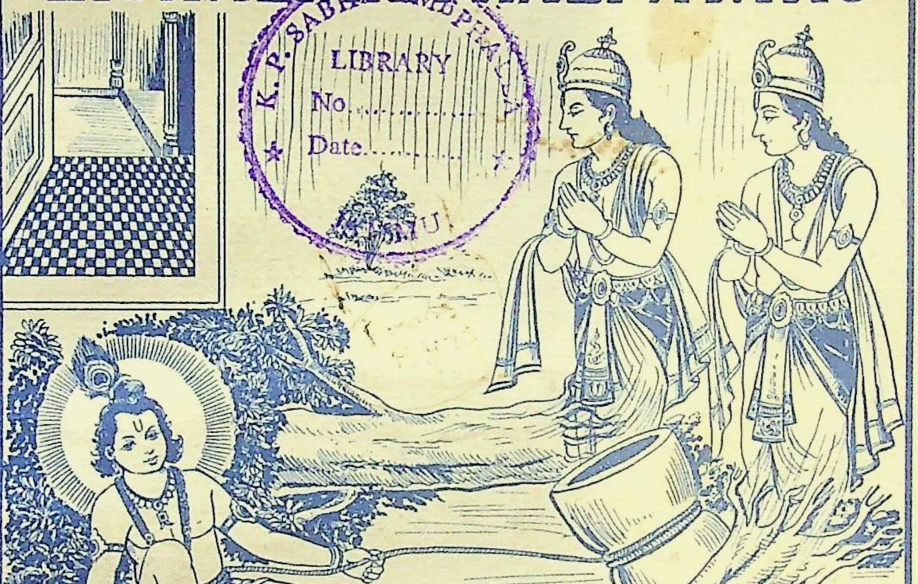
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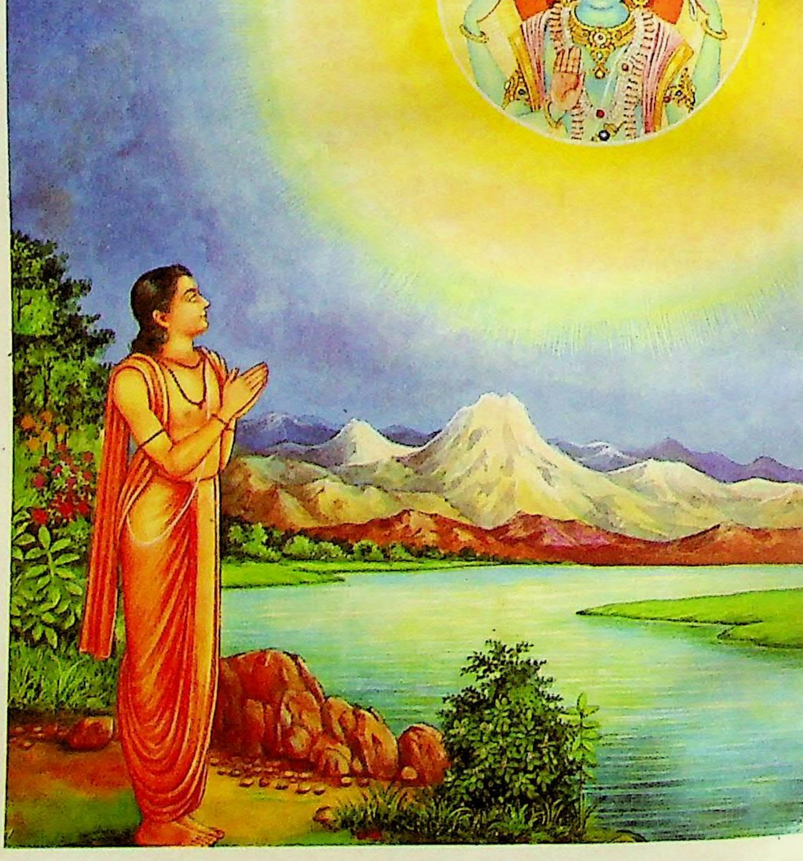
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Prayer to Lord Viṣṇu

ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते। पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते॥



The KALYANA-KALPATARU

OR

THE BLISS

A MONTHLY FOR THE PROPAGATION OF SPIRITUAL IDEAS AND LOVE FOR GOD

New Series

December 1997 No. 3

Vol. XLIII

चक्रं सहस्रकरचारु करारविन्दे

गुर्वी गदा दरवरश्च विभाति यस्य।

पक्षीन्द्रपृष्ठपरिरोपितपादपद्मो

दृग्गोचरो भवतु मेऽद्य स दीनबन्धुः॥

"Be the Lord Viṣṇu, the patron of have-nots, in whose hands there is a disc resplendent like sun, a heavy mace and a beautiful shining conch; who has kept his feet on Garuḍa, the Lord of birds, the object of vision to me."

—*Stotra Ratnāvalī*

The Virtue of the Divine Name

—Late Sri Jayadayal Goyandka

All the divine qualities of God like forbearance, compassion, peace, love, etc., abide in the divine Name as well; for through the practices of *Japa,* chanting, hearing and remembrance of the Name, those divine qualities of the Name's Possessor (God) naturally make their appearance in the *Sādhaka.* What more should be said in praise of the virtue of the Divine Name! Goswāmī Śrī Tulasīdāsajī says—

"How far shall I describe the greatness of the Name! Even Rāma Himself cannot (completely) recount its virtues."*

The glory of the divine name—

Through the practice of *Japa,* loud chanting, hearing and remembrance of the Name, all accumulated sins of the past all evils like egoism and mineness, attraction and hatred, lust and anger, greed and delusion, etc., all forms of evil conduct like falsehood, hypocrisy, violence, theft, adultery, addiction to liquor, gambling, etc., and the three forms of misery, (1) elemental (2) caused by fate, and (3) caused by the mind—get totally extinct, and God is realized.

Goswāmī Tulasīdāsajī says—

"Through remembrance of the sacred Name
Hanumān, the child of the Wind-god, keeps Rāma under his control
Debased Ajāmila, the lord of elephants and the harlot

---

* कहाँ कहाँ लगि नाम बड़ाई। रामु न सकहिं नाम गुन गाई॥

got their liberation through the glory of Śrī Hari's Name."*

Again—

"Hold the jewel of Rāma's Name on the tongue, says Tulasī, using it as the threshold;
If thou dost want light, both within and without."†

Another poet says—

"When I held the Name in my heart, sin was destroyed at once,
As if a spark of fire fell on a heap of dry grass."‡

The *Bhāgavata* says—

अज्ञानादथवा ज्ञानादुत्तमश्लोकनाम यत्।
सङ्कीर्तितमघं पुंसो दहेदेधो यथानलः॥

(VI. 2. 18)

"When the Name of glorious Hari is uttered, either consciously or unconsciously, it at once destroys the entire stock of sins of the utterer, even as fire burns up fuel."

Śrī Caitanya Mahāprabhu said—

नाम्नामकारि बहुधा निजसर्वशक्ति-
स्तत्रार्पिता नियमितः स्मरणे न कालः॥

"God has graciously revealed many divine Names and has infused all His powers into them."

In the *Gītā,* the Lord says—

अपि चेत्सुदुराचारो भजते मामनन्यभाक्।
साधुरेव स मन्तव्यः सम्यग्व्यवसितो हि सः॥
क्षिप्रं भवति धर्मात्मा शश्वच्छान्तिं निगच्छति।
कौन्तेय प्रतिजानीहि न मे भक्तः प्रणश्यति॥

(*Gītā* IX. 30-31)

"Even if the vilest sinner worships Me with exclusive

* सुमिरि पवनसुत पावन नामू। अपने बस करि राखे रामू॥
अपतु अजामिलु गजु गनिकाऊ। भए मुकुत हरिनाम प्रभाऊ॥

† राम नाम मनिदीप धरु जीह देहरीं द्वार।
तुलसी भीतर बाहेरहुँ जौं चाहसि उजिआर॥

‡ जबही नाम हिरदै धरयो भयो पापको नास।
मानो चिनगी अग्निकी परी पुराने घास॥

devotion, he should be considered a saint; for he has rightly resolved and is positive in his belief that there is nothing like devoted worship. Speedily he becomes virtuous and secures lasting peace. Know it for certain, Arjuna, that My devotee never falls."

The truth about the name—

The Divine Name is identical with God: that is to say, there is not the least difference between God and His Name. The Lord said in the *Gītā*—"यज्ञानां जपयज्ञोऽस्मि" (X. 25) i.e., "Other forms of sacrifice are only means to my realization, whereas the sacrifice in the form of *Japa* is the very same as Myself." As a matter of fact, God reveals Himself in the form of His Name. God's Form, God's Knowledge and God's Name—these three are identical things; hence when *Japa* of the Name is performed, it automatically leads to remembrance of God. The understanding of this fact means understanding the truth about the Name.

The *Kaṭhopaniṣad* says—

एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ब्रह्म एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं परम्।
एतद्ध्येवाक्षरं ज्ञात्वा यो यदिच्छति तस्य तत्॥
(I. 2. 16)

"The word *Om* is *Brahma* with attributes, it is the same as Supreme *Brahma* beyond attributes. Knowing this very word *Om,* whatever a man seeks, that he obtains."

The secret about the name—

Mental practice of *Japa* is hundred times more powerful than practice through lips. And that mental practice, again, when performed with reverence and love becomes infinitely more fruitful, and when performed secretly and disinterestedly it leads to an early realization of God.

The *Rāmacaritamānasa* says—

"The devotee whose mind, speech and action follows Me, and who practises *Bhajana* in a disinterested spirit; I always stay in the lotus of his heart."

Again,—

"He who practises remembrance (of God) with love in his heart.

Crosses the ocean of existence like one crossing the mark of a cow's hoof."*

The *Sādhaka* who understands the secret of the Divine Name will never commit sin, or practise hypocrisy, under the protection of the Name. Commission of sin under the belief that the Divine Name is potent enough to eradicate all its evil effects, and the practice of *Japa,* only as an external show, to create an impression on people, while secretly engaged in the commission of sin, are what is meant by committing sin and practising hypocrisy under the protection of the Name. The devotee, who knows the secret of the Name, remains untouched by these evils.

---

* बचन कर्म मन मोरि गति भजनु करहिं नि:काम।
तिन्ह के हृदय कमल महुँ करउँ सदा बिश्राम॥
सादर सुमिरन जे नर करहीं। भव बारिधि गोपद इव तरहीं॥

Reality and Illusion

—*Swami Ramsukhdas*

There are two things, one which really exists and the other which actually does not exist but seems to exist. The problem is what really exists is not visible and what seems to exist does not stay. For example the existence of 'Self' (I am) is a reality, because it remains in the state of wakefulness, sleep, sound sleep, unconsciousness and trance, although it is not seen. On the other hand the body and the material world which are seen, actually do not exist because they don't stay but pass away.

One who has real existence is never destroyed. The eye can see the whole world, but it can't see itself. In the same way the Supreme Lord who is the illuminator of the world and by whose power all the things are illuminated is not seen. How to know the knower of all?

विज्ञातारमरे केन विजानीयात्?

As the eye which sees all the things can't see itself, in the same way the knower of all is not known. Whatever seems to exist does not remain the same and has never remained the same. This is the common experience of everyone of us that the visible is changing all the time. All of us know this fact but we don't accept it. We accept this passing visibility as real and we accept that it is difficult to attain the real essence which is the base of the visible world and which illuminates it. It is a great surprise. He exists and is already attained. It is by His enlightenment that the illusive material world seems real.

जासु सत्यता ते जड़ माया। भास सत्य इव मोह सहाया॥

Actually it is not real, but it seems to be real because of our ignorance. The sense-organs, body, mind, intellect and the material world—all belong to one category or class and their knower or illuminator and the soul *(Ātmā)* belong to a different category. The sense-organs, body, mind, intellect and the material world are changing all the time, they are passing and flowing. They can't remain the same. They are all turning to naught. But God *(Paramātmā)* and the Soul *(Ātmā)* belong to one category and are permanent. Let us think of our childhood. Where is our childhood and where are the circumstances of our childhood? They are no more now. Similarly the circumstances and the age we are in today, will not remain in future. They are sure to pass away. But the knower and the illuminator of all these things and circumstances never changes. He is the same all the time. Now the question arises—How to attain Him? The answer is that nothing is to be done because whatever is attained by doing has beginning and end. That is born and perishes. But to do nothing doesn't mean idleness, laziness and negligence, it means to get established in the eternal essence which is ever attained. It is said in the *Gītā* that by making the mind steady on the soul, you should allow no thought to enter the mind (VI. 25).

आत्मसंस्थं मनः कृत्वा न किञ्चिदपि चिन्तयेत्।

The soul *(Ātmā)* the eternal essence pervades everywhere. You should accept it and then think of nothing.

It is said that if you think about the Supreme Spirit, *(Paramātmā)* you will lose your identity with Him because it is not possible to think about an object, unless the thinker and the object of thinking are different. Therefore get established in the Universal-Self and be silent. By being silent you will experience your identity with the Supreme Soul which is self evident, because everyone is automatically established in Him. By thinking about trashy things you

can't experience your situation in the Universal-Self. In the *Gītā* the spontaneous situation has been expressed by the word *Swastha* (XIV. 24) i.e., establishment in the Self. All the human beings actually are established in the Self, but they accept themselves established in the body which is separate from the self.

The experiencer of joys and sorrows is the individual soul *Puruṣa*.

पुरुषः सुख दुःखानां भोक्तृत्वे हेतुरुच्यते।

Now the question arises which individual soul becomes the experiencer of joys and sorrows. The answer is—

पुरुषः प्रकृतिस्थो हि भुङ्क्ते प्रकृतिजान्गुणान्।

It is the soul abiding in or identifying with *Prakṛti* (Matter) which is the experiencer of joys and sorrows. It is neither the pure self (Soul) nor *Prakṛti* that experiences joys and sorrows. *Prakṛti* is not the experiencer because it is insentient nor can the soul be the experiencer because it is pure. The experiencer is the embodied soul which is the union of Matter *(Prakṛti)* and Soul *(Puruṣa)*. When is a man the same in joys and sorrows? He is the same in joys and sorrows when he is established in the self. And there is no labour in getting established in the self because that is already established. Nothing is to be done except accepting this fact that there is one who is All-truth, All-consciousness and All-bliss and you are already established in Him. In this situation don't think about anything and remain as long as you can. Take no heed of any thought; if it comes to your mind, it is bound to perish because whatever is born is likely to perish. Like the ebb and low of a wave the thought appears and disappears. You should not think it good or bad, favourable or unfavourable and you should not be pleased or displeased. To think it good or bad is to entrap yourself. Therefore remain indifferent.

People do a lot of labour to control their mind, yet it is

not controlled. Neither try to control it nor apply it anywhere. Have an indifferent attitude and you will see that there is no problem because the force of the mind will perish spontaneously. Why do you intentionally get into trouble by trying to eradicate it? Let the passing pass away.

Lord Kṛṣṇa in the *Gītā* has spoken very little on the volatility of the mind. Arjuna put the question in two couplets which Lord Kṛṣṇa replied only in the half couplet. In the first half couplet He has supported Arjuna's statement and in the second half He has replied that the mind can be kept under control by practice and dispassion. To make it clear He has further said—

The man whose mind is not under control, for him it is difficult to achieve this *Yoga* or discipline.

असंयतात्मना योगो दुष्प्राप इति मे मतिः।

To control the mind does not mean to concentrate or check it just like controlling a hore with bridles. Here control means not to think about worldly pleasures but detach yourself from the mind and not to work according to it. Do action without having either attachment or malice. We should not attach ourselves to the mind, we should be indifferent. By thinking what is going on in the mind you connect yourself with it, otherwise it is separate from you. You are everliving and it is ever-changing. Why do you worry if it is volatile? To be indifferent is the best method to keep it under control. It is the experience of everyone of us that we try our best to control our mind and concentrate it on the Supreme Soul, yet it never concentrates. We want to remember God in solitude but the material world comes to our mind by force.

Are you responsible for what you don't want to remember but comes to your mind?

You get entangled without rhyme or reason. The thought that is born is bound to perish. So why do you

get into trouble by connecting yourselves with it? There are two things: one is what you do and the other is what happens. You are responsible only for what you do. But you are not responsible for what you do not do, but what happens. You have grown old from the young age but are you held responsible for it?

Therefore you are not responsible for the worldly thoughts that come to your mind. If you try to eradicate the thoughts from the mind, it means you are accepting their existence and making them more powerful. They are all perishing all the time. Lord Kṛṣṇa says not to think about them. If you don't think, but the thoughts come, they will calm down like the waves which rise and ebb. You should be indifferent without interfering and this is a very good tact to control the mind.

I have got this tact after several years. So apply this tact instantly. Be indifferent to the mind. Now the other point in question is that the thoughts which come to your mind are either about the past or the future events or circumstances which don't exist at present. Thus the mistake that you commit is that you accept the non-existent as existent and then try to eradicate them. Actually you are not eradicating but trying to give existence to what really do not exist and ensnare yourself in trouble.

You do not pay attention to the Supreme Soul *(Paramātmā)* who is ever attained but try to catch and then fight against the past and the future events and circumstances which do not exist at present. Only the Supreme Soul has this existence at present. Śrī Kṛṣṇa declares in the *Gītā*—"I know all the created beings (who existed or exist or will exist) of the past, present and future, but O Arjuna, none knows Me (VII. 26).

वेदाहं समतीतानि वर्तमानानि चार्जुन।
भविष्याणि च भूतानि मां तु वेद न कश्चन॥

This couplet proves that every time is present for God because He is present all the time. As in the reel of a movie all the scenes are present but the spectators feel that some scenes have passed, some are before the eyes and some will be seen; in the same way for God the past, present and future—all are present while we think them as past, present and future. Only God exists at present and therefore to think about God is the quintessence of reality. God has the real existence; He is ever-living. We are always drowned deep in Him. He is ours and we are His. Therefore instead of getting established in the non-existent material world, get established in Him, in whom you are already established, and who is ever attained. Can there be anything easier than this? In attaining Him nothing is to be done. So there is no difficulty in attaining what is really attained. We should always stick to the reality that He is ever existent and ever attained though there may be a lot of topsyturvydom. On the other hand the material world which has topsyturvydom and which is always changing and passing away is merely an illusion. Therefore be determined that you have to be indifferent to the illusive material world and that the eternal essence which always exists is ever attained.

Rāma! Rāma! Rāma!

Why spend all your valuable time in seeking perishable things? Why not spend your time seeking God first through deep meditation until you actually contact Him? When you commune with Him you will receive the imperishable treasures of heaven and all you need of the perishable material benefits of this life.

—*Self-Realization*

Destroy your Deformities

—Late Sri Hanumanprasad Poddar

Remember: lust, anger, greed etc., are not natural to you; they are deformities of your nature. Transformation of one's being or nature is very difficult, nay, well-nigh impossible; but deformities can be got rid of with some effort. That is why, while the Lord warns us in the *Gītā* that 'even the wise man follows the promptings of his nature, no restraint of one's nature is possible,' He exhorts us at the same time to give up lust, anger and greed, declaring them as self-abasing, rather, the very gates to hell. Thus it is proved that while it is most difficult to shed the characteristics of a *Brahman* or a *Kṣatriya,* it is not so difficult to shed one's deformities in the shape of lust, anger etc.

Remember: lust, anger and other weaknesses prevail over you only so long as you acknowledge their strength and meekly submit to their rule. The moment you realize your true nature and challenge them arming yourself with the unfailing strength of God, your eternal companion and greatest friend, they will become your slaves and seek the earliest opportunity to escape for their very life.

Remember: to say nothing of these weaknesses, the very citadels in which they ensconce themselves and extend their dominion, viz., the senses and mind, are your obedient servants. But you have reduced yourself to the position of their slave; that is why they make you dance to their tune and hurl you in the abyss of hell.

Remember: it is these weaknesses in the form of lust,

anger etc., that are mainly responsible for all your sins. They and they alone are your most powerful enemies; yet you have not only harboured them in your mind but you also erroneously glory and rejoice in cherishing, fostering and preserving them.

Remember: so long as the above mentioned lust, anger and greed and their associates and companions in the form of self-esteem, pride, arrogance, hypocrisy, infatuation, duplicity, mendacity, violence and other weaknesses continue to vitiate the human life its redemption is most difficult. But they are so deep-rooted that they would not easily yield to your efforts.

Remember: however powerful they may be, their strength counts for nothing in comparison to the soul-force and the power of God. Just as darkness begins to melt even with the appearance of the morning twilight, even so the very glow before the dawn of divine power immediately dispels these weaknesses. They cannot even stand before it.

Remember: spirit or soul is your very self and God is the Self of your self. He is not only homogeneous but identical with it. You have only to realize this and these deformities will disappear even as the dream world vanishes the moment you wake up.

Undoubtedly, the ultimate conclusion of *Vedas* and *Vedānta* is nothing else. The *Vedas* and the scriptures tell me that I am not body etc. It is a great sin to consider ourselves to be body, mind and intellect etc. Why should I commit such a sin?

—*Swami Rama Tirtha*

For Women

Bravery Rewarded

—Chandan Lal Dhody

Padmā was the daughter of a soldier-cum-farmer of Bhopal. Her parents were not affluent. They died when she was just a child, leaving her and her teenaged brother, Zorāwara Siṁha orphans. Zorāwara took considerable pains to get Padmā educated as well as skilled in wielding the spear and the sword. But as his expenses on the girl's education and the household exceeded the income, he fell under heavy debt which he could not repay and was imprisoned. Determined to wipe out the debt and have the brother released, Padmā adopted the male attire and went to Gwalior. Naming herself Padam Siṁha, she applied for employment in the army of Mahārājā Scindia of Gwalior. 'Padam Siṁha's' application was accepted and 'he' was enrolled as a soldier. 'He' gave matchless performance in the battles fought by the Scindia, and was rewarded with promotion. But 'he' could not keep 'his' female identity concealed. Reports reached the Māharājā that Padam Siṁha was actually a girl. The Mahārājā sent for her and affectionately asked her the reason for having disguised herself as a boy. Padmā gave the entire account. Moved and pleased, the Scindia granted her enough amount with which she could clear the debt. She went to Bhopal, repaid the debt, and had her brother released. She brought him to Gwalior. The Scindia employed him as an officer in the army. And he had Padmā married to one of his officers, a handsome, noble and brave young man. The marriage was celebrated with splendour.

Earthquakes—Why

—V. N. Sharma

The repeated shocks of earthquake attract our attention to many causes such as scientific, geological, geographical and other adjustments of the underground movements with metamorphoses of the gravitational causes of the earth and water. The modern science has dismissed some of the old theories as vague and baseless because they are not supported by scientific research and reasons. But, yet, science has also not been able to answer these things correctly. With scientists also, the surmises, possibilities and proximities are there. Though they prescribe guidelines, but yet, the philosophical aspects of so many things have not found room in the hearts and minds of the science research scholars. Such is the case with them in respect of earthquakes also.

Rāmāyaṇa, the *magnum opus* draws our attention to two occasions where the wrath of the sages caused earthquakes. The one is when sage Viśwāmitra reached the court of King Daśaratha to demand Rāma and carry him to forest to protect his sacrifices from defilement by the demons. At first, Daśaratha gave word unsought and later when he heard the demand of Rāma, he detracted from his word. At this the fulminous Viśwāmitra was enraged and he said, "This conduct is unworthy of your lineage". The sage said—"Tell me if this is your final word. I shall go back the way I came. Long may you live with your kith and kin, having swerved from the path of truth."

The earth quaked and the gods were afraid of the possible consequences of the sage's wrath.

The second occasion is when King Daśaratha was returning from Mithila after the marriage of Rāma to Ayodhya, he met the wrath of Paraśurāma which caused not only earthquake but brought storm also. Paraśurāma's march was always preceded by storm and earthquake. So great was the power of his austerities.

A more appealing and genuine reason of impending natural disasters is given in the *Mahābhārata* when Yudhiṣṭhira was plunged in sorrow and grieving over the premature death of young Abhimanyu, the beloved son of Arjuna, the great scholar and teacher, Vyāsa appeared on the scene and consoled him thus—"You are wise and a knower" said Vyāsa, "and it is not meet that you should allow yourself to be lost in grief in this manner. Knowing the nature of death, it is not right that you should grieve like the unlearned." Vyāsa proceeded to console the bereaved *Dharmaputra*. When Brahmā created living beings, he was filled with anxiety. These lives will multiply and soon their number will be beyond the capacity of the earth to bear. There seems to be no way of coping with this. This thought of Brahmā grew into a flame which became bigger and bigger until it threatened to destroy all creation at once. Then Rudra came and pleaded for allaying this destructive fire. Brahmā controlled the great fire and subdued it into the law that is known to mortals as death. This law of the creator takes many forms, such as war or sickness or accident and keeps the balance between birth and death. Death is thus an inescapable law of existence, ordained for the good of the world. It is not true wisdom to be impatient with death or to grieve immoderately for those who die. There is no reason to pity those who pass away. We may have reason indeed to grieve for those who remain."

It is proclaimed of the *Mahābhārata* by an eminent jurist and a student of philosophy Mr. H. V. Divatia, "what is not in it, is nowhere". Even after twenty-five centuries we can use the same words about it.

The words in the above paragraph "Brahmā controlled the great fire and subdued it into the law that is known to mortals as death. This law of the creator takes many forms such as war, or sickness or accident and keeps the balance between birth and death"; sound high and are relevant in respect of increasing population of the world causing dearth of amenities of life and space to live. The words, "this law of creator takes many forms" do also include earthquake as one of the many forms of death. It is a clear cut innuendo towards the present earthquake causing terror and upheavals in the minds of the people of the world. This is the positive law of nature and science cannot guarantee life against death. Truly says Vyāsa "Death is thus an inescapable law, of existence, ordained for the good of the world. It is not true wisdom to be impatient with death or to grieve immoderately for those who die. There is no reason to pity for those who pass away. We may have reason indeed to grieve for those who remain".

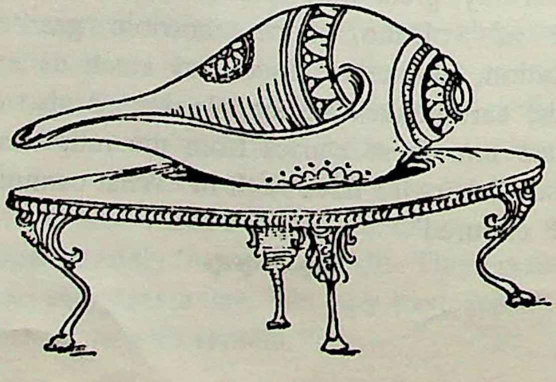
Our religious books have already unanimously proclaimed long back the *Dooms Day, Qayāmat,* or *Pralaya.* No wonder, if any, great war, epidemic, accident, earthquake, outburst of volcano, storm, horrible gas explosion, conflagration, famine or flood may catch us napping of which the earthquakes are signals. Let us also delve and investigate into these causes from the religious point of view also. Otherwise have faith in "What cannot be cured must be endured".

The Fate

—Dr. R. D. Srivastava

Fate is a wayward child at play,
Who constructs pyramids from mould of clay,
Then with one kick to ground it lays,
Turning its back saunters away.
Goes with his frown our power and pelf,
And treasure and crown which we pride so great,
Like lightning we can strike, like lion fight,
And triumphal arches we may raise,
But alas! lightning is such a brief flash,
And clouds dark soon shroud victor's face,
And beast supreme fleetingly his power displays,
Then slumbers in bushes whence he came.
The lofty citadels, the man made mountains,
Crumble as toys when mother earth her sides change,
In vain hopes we live, in vain hopes we die,
For kingdom of earth or empire of paradise.

Om Tat Sat



Why Evil and Suffering in the World?

—R. P. Gupta

Why is there evil and suffering in the world? Why does God permit these to exist? These are very old questions which still torment human mind. We all know about the horrors of war, disasters of natural calamities and accidents, afflictions wrought by hard-hearted criminals, the pains of the sick and the pangs of poverty. We see every day that the virtuous suffer whereas the wicked prosper. This compels many to conclude that either there is no God at all or if there is one, he is not benevolent.

In the first place good and evil or happiness and suffering are relative concepts. We cannot conceive of one without the other. Suffering has got its own value. Imagine for a moment that you have unknowingly put your hand or foot into fire. If there is no pain you are not likely to withdraw it from fire until considerable damage has been done. The universe in fact could not have been brought into existence without the pairs of opposites. It would, therefore, be futile to expect a world free from evil and suffering. William Blake has rightly said:

Joy and woe are woven fine
A clothing for the soul divine
Under every grief and pine
Runs a joy with silken twine
It is right it should be so
Man was made for joy and woe
And when this we rightly know
Safely through the world we go.

Bhakta Gāthā

Śrī Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha Swāmigal and His Śrī Kṛṣṇa Līlā Taraṅgiṇī

—*N. Rajagopalan*

Unknown spiritual forces would seem to allocate divine work among saints, sages and men of eminence and guide them too to fulfil their mission successfully. If sage Vālmīki presented the immortal *Rāmāyaṇa,* sage Vyāsa was destined to legate *Mahābhārata,* the epic nonpareil. Even so, in the field of Classical Carnatic music, which in essence is but the continuation of the Indian Classical Music of yore, Śrī Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha Swāmigal composed *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Līlā Taraṅgiṇī* in Sanskrit, while saint Tyāgarāja brought out the succinct and glamorous opera *Naukā Caritramu* and *Prhlāda Caritramu* in Telugu and Arunachala Kavirayar and Gopālakṛṣṇa Bhāratī composed the *Rāma Nāṭakam* and *Saint Nandanār* in Tamil. All these are in opera style and the enchanting songs are in constant use in *Bhajanas* and concerts, at homes and temples. There is alluring music in delectable *Rāgas* set to appropriate *Tālas* and elevating *Sāhitya.* The inter se allocation is remarkable indeed.

That Thanjavur was the prime unquestioned citadel of art, architecture, sculpture and literature for centuries until recently, is an accepted fact. There was, as it were, a boom of eminence and excellence in all fields of activity. It is no wonder that eminence that had its roots elsewhere too tended to converge on Thanjavur to blossom to its full! Swāmī Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha was one among such great souls

who rose to his full stature only when he reached the Cauvery Delta. Born in Kaza in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh, of Nīlakaṇṭha Śāstrī and Pārvatī Ammā, he was called Govinda Śāstrī initially. A disciple of Vāsudeva Pandit, he was highly proficient in Sanskrit and music.

As was the custom, Govinda became a *Gṛhastha* marrying Utchammā of Vetadri situated on the bank of River Kṛṣṇā. Presumably he was a passionate husband who could ill-stomach separation from his spouse. Kṛṣṇā was in spate but undeterred he sought to cross it and was caught in the turbulent swirls. Presumably taking a leaf from the life of Ādi Śaṅkara, he took to *Āpat Saṁnyāsa.* The rebirth took him to the other bank safe and sure. He was not very much enamoured of sticking on to renunciation but the good wife saw the change in him and divined the truth. She saved his soul and set him in the direction of fulfilment of his mission. Govinda got himself initiated by Śivarāma Tīrtha at Kanchipuram and assumed the name of Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha. (There is another version that he was initiated by Rāmānanda at Varanasi.) Tīrtha went on a long pilgrimage which included such far-flung places like Prayag, Puri, Mathura, Rameswaram, Govindapuram, Tiruvisainallur and centres of music and dance like Kucimanchi and Kuchipudi. He underwent severe penance for twelve years. It was a Tīrtha severely afflicted by stomach pain when he was at Nadukaveri in Thanjavur district. Following a vision on the possible cure, he reached Bhupatirajapuram which is since then called Varahur, a prominent place. Either he sang the full opera or completed it at Varahur and the musical opera, *Śrī Kṛṣṇa Līlā Taraṅgiṇī* was born there. And he got cured of his illness too by the grace of the Lord of Dwaraka.

'*Śrī Kṛṣṇa Līlā Taraṅgiṇī* is one of the many works that came in the wake of the immortal *Gīta Govinda.* Its

literary and artistic content and lilting music have charmed successive generations.' Written in chaste and melodious sanskrit, he presumably meant it to be played on the stage to bring out the grandeur, glamour and glory of the theme as a *Dṛśyakāvya,* but actually select songs are sung at *Bhajanas* and concerts as individual pieces. The work is one of *Madhurā Bhakti* and is said to be closer to *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam.* It comprises 155 songs, 348 *Ślokas, Gadyams, Vacanas,* etc., besides *Selkattus* for *Nṛtta.* Ācārya Śivaśaṅkara Śāstrī points out:

'While intoxicating *Śṛṅgāra* is the dominant note in *Gīta Govindam, Ātmānanda Bhakti* is the keynote in the *Taraṅgiṇi.* Tīrtha avoids lustful influences and the *Gopikās* are devoted to *Brahmānanda.'*

The work traces the life of Śrī Kṛṣṇa from birth to His marriage with Rukmiṇī. The work deserves to be popularised and brought to full focus as a tribute to the eminent saint.

The period of Tīrtha is variously given as 1675-1745, 1580-1680 and 1610-1705. He attained *Nirvāṇa* at Varahur, it is said. Tirupoonturutti which lies closeby also claims Tīrtha and has been celebrating an annual festival with *Taraṅgams* alone. It seems that there was another saint here of the name, Śrī Ananta Padmanābha Tīrtha Nārāyaṇa Guruswāmī and his Mutt also is here. This saint in his *Pūrvāśrama* was the son of Gaṅgādhara Śāstrī and Mangalāmbikā and was born at Giru Durgam. The image of Śrī Nārāyaṇa Tīrtha is found in the copper *Pīṭham* of Śrī Rukmiṇī Satyabhāmā Sameta Bālakṛṣṇa icon at Ranganathapuram near Varahur depicting him as worshipping the Celestials. A great saint, truly devoted to Śrī Kṛṣṇa, an eminent poet and scholar, the work of this musical soul deserves the notice of universities and institutions.

Integrated Individual

—*Prof. K. L. Bhalla*

According to Rohit Mehtā..." The creation of an integrated individual is indeed the purpose of the intensely dynamic message of the *Gītā*." In modern times when the individual is becoming more and more insignificant due to the impacts of political and economic forces, the *Gītā* brings to man a message of hope.

In the words of Dr. Rādhākṛṣṇan—'When we learn to look at things as derived from the One Transcendent Reality, we are delivered from all groping and bewilderment.' Manifestation by itself poses many questions for which no answer can be found in the manifest world. It is unmanifest which contains answers to the problems which are raised through the manifested things. Fear, fearlessness, fame and ill-fame all proceed from the unborn.

What has been written above seems to be paradoxical. But it is not so. The electric current which runs through a refrigerator is not different from that runs through an electric chair on which a murderer is electrocuted. All states of being, proceed from the unmanifest, the unmanifest is neither good nor bad—it is pure energy. The unborn is essence of all things. Lord Kṛṣṇa says, "I, 'O Arjuna, am the self seated in the hearts of all creatures. I am the beginning, the middle and the very end of beings." The message of the *Gītā* has an important bearing on the problems of the modern world. It shows a way out of the complexities of the mind to complete freedom of the Super-mind. The path is not meant only for the few, it can be trodden by all who seek

freedom from life's hurdles. Science has not cured selfishness in man or created in him a hunger for righteousness. He has to be recreated after the image of God in true holiness.

Thrown in the turmoils of life, we are confused and perplexed as to what constitutes right action in a given situation. To act or not to act is very often the dilemma in which we find ourselves. Many times it is action which imparts a complexity to a situation, but, frequently, it also happens that non-action makes confusion worse confounded.

The *Gītā* suggests that the individual whose mind is receptive and yet not selective is truly integrated—he is at peace with himself and so is at peace with all. The peace and silence of the mind are to be achieved not by submission nor by resistance. Acceptance is the only path that leads to that deep silence in which alone communion with the unborn and the unmanifest is possible. The truly integrated man occupies his rightful place in the beautiful pattern of the Whole. The *Bhagvad Gītā* indicates a way of life which is revolutionary. It opens to us new dimensions of living enabling us to scale new heights of human endeavour perfecting the individual—that has been an age-long issue. Integrated individuals can help in nation building.

Today corruption and selfishness reign supreme. All seekers should come together to end this sorry state of affairs. This can be achieved by working for the happiness of those around us. Sharing and spreading of time honoured treasures can be of great help. We have to be saved from ourselves, from the infirmity and the corruption in our own nature.

A condition of poise cannot be brought about by an act of conscious renunciation. It is an inner state which comes into being naturally and spontaneously. The State of integration can be attained by following the precepts of the *Gītā*.

Read and Digest

—*V. P. Tandon*

The highest Divine knowledge is paradoxical to those who do not have key to it.

* * *

God has fixed for each stage of our life, which we can neither prolong nor shorten.

* * *

A purehearted devotee with clear conscience sees definite signs of divine presence all around him.

* * *

Unless we light our own spiritual lamps, all lights on earth or in the sky are in vain.

* * *

Self denial is not as self immolation but a denial of lower instincts only.

* * *

Effects of evil become cumulative in shutting out God's grace.

* * *

Gāyatrī Mantra is a true universal protecting and creative principle of Supreme Divine potency and productive of highest individual and social welfare.

* * *

The real aim of human birth is uprooting of all evils and rescinding from instincts of animality to transform human into Divine.

* * *

Worship God as only worthy to be worshipped.

Vāstu Śāstra
(Ancient India's Edifice Science)

—Vishnupriya

शास्त्रज्ञानेन सर्वस्य लोकस्य परमं सुखम्।
चतुर्वर्गफलप्राप्तिरालोकश्च भवेद् ध्रुवम्॥
शिल्पशास्त्रपरिज्ञानान्मर्त्योऽपि सुरतां व्रजेत्।
परमानन्दजनकं देवानामिदमीरितम्॥

(Viśwakarmā Vāstu Śāstra)

Vāstu Śāstra, the edifice science, bequeathed by sages of India is the basis of all old temple and house construction in India. Such constructions blended harmoniously with the five great elements of Nature namely Ether, Vāyu, Agni, Water and mother Earth. *'Śilpa Ratna', 'Kāśyapa Saṁhitā'* and *'Viśwakarmā Vāstu Śāśtra'* are some of the prominent written works, dealing with this neglected ancient science. The opening verses from *'Viśwakarmā Vāstu Śāstra'* above means:" Because of *Vāstu,* the whole world gets health, happiness and all round prosperity. Human beings attain Divinity with this *Śāstra. Vāstu* and the existence of this world are interrelated. Because of *Vāstu,* man gets not only the worldly pleasures but can experience heavenly bliss also."

'Vāstu Vidyā' has its origin in *Ṛg Veda* and primarily deals with (i) time for commencing abodes for God and His created beings and (ii) Criteria for selecting the site as well as materials used for construction and the mode of construction. Various *'Purāṇas'* in India give details of *Vāstu Śāstra.* The *'Skanda Purāṇa'* deals with town planning, *'Vāyu Purāṇa'* dwells on temples at high altitudes, the *'Garuda Purāṇa'* discusses residential buildings and

temples in general, while *'Nārada Purāṇa'* explains intricacies on wells, water reservoirs, lakes etc. India's famous epics, 'The *Rāmāyaṇa'* and 'The *Mahābhārata'* refers to *Vāstu Śāstra* as the basis for the episodes of state of Ayodhya city and the bridge between India and Srilanka near Rameswaram built by Lord Rāma as also *Māyānagarī* in Indraprastha City by the architect Maya at the behest of Lord Kṛṣṇa, in the *Mahābhārata.* Even the city of 'Dwaraka, where Lord Kṛṣṇa lived, was built as per this edifice science, sadly forgotten in the *Kali Yuga.*

Vāstu Puruṣa is the Deity supervising man-made structures put up over mother earth. Propitiation of this Deity, is a must in India before building one's house or a community's temple. *'Pañcāṅgas'* (almanacs) specify the characteristics of this Deity's sleeping posture and the duration of 90 minutes of His waking activities, on 8 occasions in 8 months out of 12 in a year. This period is considered auspicious for religious activities.

Tirupati Bālāji Temple in the Tirumala hills—the richest temple in India—is a splendid example of a construction exactly as per the rules of *Vāstu Śāstra.* Some of the building principles are:—Before entering the temple premises, on the south side there should be arrangement for keeping shoes. Drinking water arrangements must be in the east, as also the bathrooms. Toilets should be outside the temple premises. Parking arrangements should be outside the temple in the east or north side. Fountains or lutus ponds in front of the temple should be in the north east. *'Dhwaja Stambha'* should be in front of the idol on the left side. *Homakuṇḍa* should be in south east. Locating a temple where there is sea, river, tank, lake etc., in the east or north of the plot chosen, is the best. The shadow of the temple should not fall on other buildings. The plot should be square or rectangular.

Discourse hall should be in the south west. Water tanks or wells should be in the north east. Entrance gate on the east of the compound is the best. Next best is the entrance on the north. The sight of the principal Idols stare in the temple should be trained on the seventh part of the door, if the door is divided into 9 parts. Very elaborate details are available but which cannot be spelt out in a short 'eye-opener' such as this writing.

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अशुभेषु समाविष्टं शुभेष्वेवावतारयेत्।
प्रयत्नाच्चित्तमित्येष सर्वशास्त्रार्थसंग्रहः॥

"It is the gist of all the scriptures in the world that one should divert his mind from the wrong and inauspicious and employ it to the right and auspicious by all means."

—*Yogavāsiṣṭha*

No man may be said to be so depraved that he is outside the pale of Divine Mercy. And such are the potency and mysterious workings of the soul that sometimes even the most evil of men have changed into saints. Vicious persons, convicting themselves by their own consciences, often judge their souls to be lost forever. But the *Gītā* gives assurance that they too may recover their long forgotten spiritual heritage. No sin is unforgivable, no evil insuperable, for the world of relativity contains to absolutes.

—*Self-Realization*

The first rule of the life is that man must live the highest life of which he is capable, overcoming selfishness, overcoming fear, overcoming the temptation to palter with truth in order to earn earthly favours. The first formula of belief is *'Satyānnāsti paro dharmaḥ'*, there is no higher law of conduct than truth.

—*Aurobindo*

For Youth

Upanishadic Convocation

--Prof. H. C. Gaur

Introductory background:

In our scriptures, the (human) life span is considered to be divided into four stages termed *Āśramas,* each with prescribed duties and responsibilities. These, in succession, are: *Brahamcarya, Gṛhastha, Vānaprastha* and *Saṁnyāsa.* One proceeds following the sequence from one order to the next. To illustrate: from *Brahamcarya Āśrama* one proceeds to *Gṛhastha;* from *Gṛhastha* to *Vānaprastha Āśrama* and from *Vānaprastha* one proceeds to *Saṁnyāsa Āśrama* but never otherwise *(Bhāgavata* 11.17.38), meaning one cannot go back to the previous order or be without following the duties and responsibilities of any order and also there is no fifth order.

Brahamcarya Āśrama is the life of celibacy. After the sacred thread investiture *(Upanayana)* ceremony, the adolescent boy would leave his home and parents, for initiation into spirituality. He would live at the house of the preceptor *(Guru)* and stay there as a member of the family (shunning comforts to which he may have been accustomed) or in a residential institution (the *Gurukula)* run by some reputed teacher *(Guru),* till his study of *Vedas* and other scriptures *(Smṛtis)* was considered complete. Two types of those in *Brahamcarya Āśrama* (a *Brahamcārī)* have been distinguished (*Kūrma. P.* 1.2. 74-75): *Upkurvāṇa Brahamcārī,* and *Naiṣṭhika Brahamcārī.*

The former after studying *Vedas* would enter the next

phase of life in *Gṛhastha Āśrama,* while the latter stayin with the *Guru* (or at the *Gurukula*), would continue wi the study of *Brahmavidyā* (knowledge of *Brahman*). Th latter will not enter *Gṛhastha Āśrama,* in due course h would enter *Saṁnyāsa Āśrama.*

The *Upkurvāṇa Brahamcārī* who wishes to enter th next phase of life as householder *(Gṛhasthī),* would mak some reverential (token) parting present *(Dakṣiṇā)* to th preceptor to express his gratitude and also perform, wi the approval of the preceptor, the ceremony known a *Samāvartana-Saṁskāra* (marking the completion of hi studies) before leaving the premises of the *Guru* or th *Gurukula* for his home.

Gṛhastha Āśrama is the period of life in which h marries, has children and takes care of them. Here agai two types of *Gṛhasthī* have been distinguished (*Kūrma. I* 1.2. 76-77):

Those, who get involved into the affairs of the famil *(Sādhaka-Gṛhasthī),* and those, freed from three debts t *Guru (Ācārya),* ancestors *(Pitṛ)* and gods *(Deva),* ar indifferent to the affairs of the family *(Udāsīna-gṛhasthī*

Both would go through the customary religious dutie inculcated from the study of *Vedas* and *Smṛtis* (which wa learnt as a *Brahamcārī*) and perform them regularl performance of sacrifice *(Yajña),* (further) study of *Veda (Svādhyāya)* and giving of charities *(Dāna)* being th essential ones.

Manu has praised the period of life as a householder. "People in the other (three) orders are sustained by th householder with gifts of food and knowledge of *Veda* (meaning daily recitation)"... "desiring eternal/incorruptibl *(Akṣaya)* heaven (after death) and happiness in this life one should assiduously discharge duties as a householder it cannot be carried out with uncontrolled (weakly controlled

senses *(Durbalaindriya)"*. Manu continues: "The *Ṛṣis*, the gods, the manes, guests *(Atithi)* and ancestors expectantly look upon the householder (for maintenance etc.). He should discharge the duties, he owes them. Let him honour: the *Ṛṣis* (sages) by recitation of *Vedas*, the deities (gods) by proper offering into the fire, the manes with *(Śrāddha)* ceremonies for the dead, the (chance) guests with hospitality, priest with appropriate reception...". (*M. S.* 3. 78-81). This is also the period which is intended to prepare him for the next two stages of life.

One has to think of the appropriate time when to enter the next period of life *(Vānaprastha Āśrama)*. From undue attachment to the family, the *Sādhaka Gṛhasthī* tends to linger on in *Gṛhastha Āśrama*. The appropriate time according to Manu is: "A householder when he... finds his hairs turned grey, the skin of the body furrowed with lines and wrinkles and sees the sons of his own son, should (renouncing all possessions) resort to forest, placing his wife under the protection of his son or in his company (*M.S.* 6.2,3) or continue to live at home but being indifferent (as *Udāsīna Gṛhasthī)* to all happenings and things in the world. It is unfortunate as one often sees, observed Śaṅkarācārya. "(though) the body is worn out, the head (meaning hair) has turned grey, the mouth has become toothless, yet the old man moves about leaning on his staff, with bundle of (unfulfilled) desires" (*Bhaj. Go.* 15). Thus many persons prolonging the period of *Gṛhastha Āśrama* may even die as a householder (as a *Sādhaka Gṛhasthī)*.

Vānaprastha Āśrama, is the following period of life when having discharged the three debts to gods *(Deva)*, to sages *(Ṛṣis)* and to manes *(Pitṛ)* (*M.S.* 4. 257), having completed the family responsibility/duties and having helped children to settle in life, he prepares for gradual detachment from the worldly and family affairs and the spiritual

enlightenment. This is the stage for austere discipline and austerity *(Tapaḥ)*, leading to desirelessness and tranquillity. Two types of *Vānaprasthī* have been recognized (*Kūrma. P.* 1.2. 78-79): Those who continue to practise religious austerities, worship of gods, perform fire-sacrifice (the *Tapas-Vānaprasthī*) and those who by prolonged austerities *(Tapaḥ)* have conditioned their body and are always engaged in meditation (the *Saṁnyāsika Vānaprasthī*).

Saṁnyāsa Āśrama is the final stage in which a person becomes a sort of wandering mendicant or ascetic. He is not bound, as those in the first three stages of life are, even in respect of religious ceremonies. It is this stage that is meant to lead him to the realization of *Brahman*. Here again, a distinction has been made (*Kūrma. P.* 1.2 80-81) between those who are always engaged in *Yoga* practices, possess intense desire for emancipation *(Mokṣa)*, have attained control over sense-organs *(Jitendriya)* and are always engaged in knowledge (the *ParmeṣṭhikaSaṁnyāsī*) and those who are ever absorbed and satisfied in the Self and who behold the Self in all beings and all beings in the Self (the *Saṁnyāsī Yogī*).

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Enjoyment is the million headed serpent that we must tread under foot. We renounce and go on, then find nothing and despair; but hold on, hold on. The world is a demon. It is a kingdom of which the puny ego is king. Put it away and stand firm. Give up lust and gold and fame and hold fast to the Lord, and at last we shall reach a state of perfect indifference. The idea that the gratification of the senses constitutes enjoyment is purely materialistic. There is not one spark of real enjoyment there; all the joy there is, is a mere reflection of the true bliss.

—*Swami Vivekananda*

Rāma—The Ideal Deity

—H. R. Koundinya

Scriptures claim that chanting of *Mantra* will liberate the humanity in *Kaliyuga*. It appears easy to follow this practice but at the same time it seems to be a difficult task too. For, one has to mobilise one's mental forces and concentrate on the ideal God. Concentration is only possible in an atmosphere of peace both physical and mental. Peace is a state of mind possible only through consciously honest feelings of the presence of an Ideal God in the heart around whom all thoughts are centered.

Rāma, the Divine Incarnation is indubitably the Ideal God of the Indians. He is an ideal force exercising still a chastening influence on people by the life of *Dharma* personified. Rāma, the embodiment of *Dharma* itself is the only Divine Incarnation—*Pūrṇāvatāra.* He is both man and God combined. His life is a living force to the householder who from His life can draw inspiration, proper solace, appropriate solution to every problem of life amidst his trials and difficulties and lead a disciplined and purposeful ideal life in peace. Rāma's earthly life has direct bearing on our life. He lived as a son, husband, brother just as we do. Rāma, was the disguised human form of the incarnation of the idestructible Nārāyaṇa who descended to earth and lived a human life to set a dynamic example to men who have to face trials and difficulties. His restrained life has taught us wisdom pregnant with an integrated sense. If that were not so, His example would

be of little use to man. The force of his example is twofold. It is Divine on the one hand and human on the other. It shows us no miracles and proves that *Karma* can only be lived. Certainly, no other God than Rāma can be the saviour of a householder by bestowal of much-coveted peace that forms the basis of alround security for temporal happiness as well as spiritual bliss.

In *Rāmāyaṇa* the conflict of every situation has been invested with *Dharma* proper and peculiar to it. What has been depicted by sage Vālmīki in *Rāmāyaṇa* within the frame work of a beautiful story, reveals *Dharma* in its glory. *Rāmāyaṇa* has proved that even a householder can rise to idealistic heights by virtue of his Dharmic life. Rāma's life is a glaring commentary on the shocking deficiencies of practical knowledge of *Dharma* a householder should practise through the times. What *Dharma* intends to convey to a householder is embodied in the Dharmic life of Śrī Rāma whose example shall be an indelible stamp on the fabric of the senses of His Devotee. What then therefore is that it is incumbent on every householder to emulate. His example by living the life of action unmindful of the fruit thereof constantly chanting His name.

It is only *Rāmāyaṇam* that could form a fair basis for a materialist aspiring for a life of spiritual enlightenment. Adoration of Rāma can be the preamble to spiritual *Sādhanā.* The *Mantra* of *Rāmanāma* is the delicious food. *Rāmanāmāmṛta,* the ambrosia an all powerful cure of all ills of mind and body. Let us resign our mind in its triple activities of thought, speech and action to the lotus-feet of Śrī Rāma, and all at once sins, afflictions will beyond all doubt, melt away in the sunshine of His grace. By constant meditation of His name, you are invoking His spirit to descend upon you and transform your being into a personality of His qualities immortal. One may pose the

question. "How can an ordinary man afford to give up his worldly obligations to his wife and children in favour of constant meditation?" It is not necessary to give up one's pursuits of livelihood. What is most important is that one should not be knowingly blind to one's inner development too. One should always aim at shaping one's thoughts, actions and speech towards perfection of one's devotion to Lord Śrī Rāma and allow oneself to one's duties unattachedly in the love of Śrī Rāma whose hallowed name generates a thrill of echo in one's senses. Let the conscience be elevated to the highest sense that you are breathing the very life of Rāma. Then a state of *Rāmanāma*—intoxication prevails in the mental plane where nothing but peace reigns. Now that peace is insured, then your concentration will not be jeopardized in any eventual trials and difficulties of any magnitude, and you will not go imbalanced but become steady and firm to acquit yourself in the double duty of life, namely cosmic and spiritual.

Now-a-days when human beings are afflicted with several maladies physical as well as mental, when material happiness is more hankered after than spiritual peace which is the real security against what may be called total destruction of the sanity of the human race, the only remedy that can be rightly advised, may be prescribed, is the tonic of *Rāmanāma*. Let the soul be of the essence of *Rāmanāma,* the heart be reinforced by the elixir of invincible faith in the hallowed name of Rāma. Let us be *Upāsakas* of Rāma, the bestower of peace, plenty, power, joy and bliss. Let us recall Rāma at a regularly regulated hour, come what may! Let our lives be spiritually dedicated to the propagation of the cult of *Rāma-Bhakti* in which are mingled both Divinity and Humanity.

Peace be to all.

Motherly-Love

भोर भयो जागहु, रघुनंदन। गत व्यलीक भगतनि उर-चंदन॥ १॥
ससि करहीन, छीन दुति तारे। तमचुर मुखर, सुनहु मेरे प्यारे॥ २॥
बिकसित कंज, कुमुद बिलखाने। लै पराग रस मधुप उड़ाने॥ ३॥
अनुज सखा सब बोलनि आये। बंदिन्ह अति पुनीत गुन गाये॥ ४॥
मनभावतो कलेऊ कीजै। तुलसिदास कहँ जूँठनि दीजै॥ ५॥

(*Gītāwalī* 36)

O dear, my dear son, Raghunandana!
Wake up for the sun has since risen.
For the hearts of devotees so sincere,
Thou art the very sandal-salve, my dear,
Moonbeams have lost their glitter.
Stars too have become lacklustre.
Hark, cocks are crowing, my dear.
Lotuses have blossomed since dawn.
Lilies have shrivelled since then.
Relishing nectar and taking pollens,
Bumble-bees have flown to other places.
Lo, Thy younger brothers and companions
Have come to pay their compliments.
Lo, bards are reciting Thy divine deeds.
Have breakfast of Thy own choice.
And pass on the leftovers to Tulasīdāsa.

—*Translated by* R. S. Sengar

Swāmī Vivekānanda on the Greatness of Hinduism

—R. N. Lakhotia

One of the ways of celebrating the Golden Jubilee of India's Independence is to take pride in being an Indian. Likewise, every Hindu should feel proud of being a Hindu and remove the inferiority complex which has been caused by the wrong definition of secularism under which it has become fashionable for the educated-Hindus to decry everything about Hinduism. It would do well for hindus to remember that Hinduism is a great religion and this fact was emphasised by no less a personality than one of the greatest saints of modern India, Swāmī Vivekānanda, who in his writings and speeches time and again dwelt on the greatness of Hinduism. In this article, we are giving hereinbelow this fact with the actual quotes from the speeches and writings of Swāmī Vivekānanda, with reference to the *Complete Works,* referred to as *(C.W.)* followed by the relevant page Number.

Based on Principles:

Swāmī Vivekānanda at the Parliament of Religions in Chicago (USA) in 1893 made several speeches bringing out the greatness of Hindu religion and the claim of Hindu religion to be the universal religion. Swāmī Vivekānanda brought out before the world the clear fact that Hinduism was not a religion based on some historical characters but it rested upon principles. This is what Swāmī Jī emphasised, "At the same time, just as our God is an Impersonal and yet a Personal God, so is our religion a most intensely

impersonal one—a religion based upon principles—and yet with an infinite scope for the play of persons; for what religion gives you more Incarnations, more prophets and seers, and still waits for infinitely more?" (*C.W.* III. 183).

Vitality in Religion:

Swāmī Vivekānanda strongly believed that a person who wants to lead a good life must essentially be a religious person. He emphasised the need of Hindu religion for invigorating the people. In this connection, this is what he said, "We have seen that our vigour, our strength, nay, our national life is in our religion. I am not going to discuss now whether it is right or not, whether it is correct or not, whether it is beneficial or not in the long run, to have this vitality in religion, but for good or evil it is there; you cannot get out of it, you have it now and forever, and you have to stand by it, even if you have not the same faith that I have in our religion. You are bound by it, and if you give it up, you are smashed to pieces. That is the life of our race and that must be strengthened" (*C.W.* III. 289).

Living Religion:

Swāmī Vivekānanda knew about the strength of Hindu religion and also its weaknesses in actual practice. He, therefore, wanted that people should not merely sing the praises of abstract philosophical principles of Hindu religion but should live by a religion which is practical. He wanted Hinduism to be explained to the people in simple and practical language. This is what he said in this regard, "The dry, abstract *Advaita* must become living-poetic-in every day life; out of hopelessly intricate mythology must come concrete moral forms; and out of bewildering Yogism must come the most scientific and practical psychology and all this must be put in a form so that a child may grasp it." (*C.W.* V. 104).

Spirit of Tolerance:

Swāmī Vivekānanda explained to the world that Hindu

religion was the most tolerant of all religions. He often used to say that the great philosophy of Hinduism or *Vedānta* was to respect the views of different religions because God or the Super Soul or *Brahman* is essentially one and resides in all creatures as *"Ātman"*. This is beautifully summed up in *Upaniṣads* as *"Ekam Sat Viprā Bahudhā Vadanti"* i.e., the infinite being i.e., God is one but sages call it by different names. Swāmī Vivekānanda said, "It is the recognition of this truth, which has enabled the Hindus to perceive the universal truth of all religions, from the lowest to the highest; it has made of them the only people who never had religious persecutions" (*C.W.* I. 385).

Manifestation of Divinity:

Swāmī Vivekānanda explained to the world that God himself was present in all human beings. He always used to call the human beings as essentially divine. Therefore, he emphasised that if a Hindu is not spiritual, he would not call him a Hindu. Swāmī Vivekānanda said, "With Hindus, Jains, and Buddhists, in fact everywhere in India, there is the idea of a spiritual soul which is the receptacle of all power. And you know full well that there is not one system of philosophy in India which teaches you that you can get power or purity or perfection from outside; but they all tell you that these are your birthright, your nature" (*C.W.* III. 159).

Swāmī Vivekānanda wanted this divinity of men to be manifested in actual life. He said, "Mere believing in certain theories and doctrines will not help you much. The mighty word that came out from the sky of spirituality in India was *Anubhūti,* realisation, and ours are the only books, which declare again and again: "The Lord is to be seen" (*C.W.* III. 377).

Strength:

Swāmī Vivekānanda detested the idea of a Hindu

imagining himself to be weak. He wanted the Hindus to be strong and India to be a strong nation. The true spirit of non-violence or *Ahiṁsā*, according to Swāmī Jī, does not mean cowardice, but the strength, renunciation and sacrifice of oneself for the good of others. This requires great strength. We should remember the prophetic and inspiring words of Swāmī Vivekānanda which point out the greatness of Hinduism, "Strength, strength is what the *Upaniṣads* speak to me from every page. This is the one great thing to remember, it has been the one great lesson I have been taught in my life; strength, it says, strength, O man, be not weak" (*C.W.* III. 237).

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> Self-sacrifice is the prime requisite in all spheres of activity. Through self-sacrifice the meanest of creatures may attain blessedness by pursuing any form of activity sanctioned by the scriptures. Of worldly enjoyments one should partake of only asmuch as is barely necessary for the maintenance of the body. If that is not possible, the blessed state may be attained even by shaking off attachment for enjoyments.
>
> —*Jayadayal Goyandka*

> Give up the curse of lust and wrath. Give up delusion and greed. Remember who you really are. Fools are they that are blind to the glory of the Self.
>
> —*Shankaracharya*

> Forbearance, endurance, self-control, non-stealing (i.e., non-acceptance of things not one's own), purity, control of the senses, intelligence, learning, absence of anger and (adherence to) truth, these are the ten characteristics of virtue *(Dharma)*.
>
> —*Manu Samhitā*

Story

Ahiṁsā

"Yes, Dādā jī, then why did Lord Kṛṣṇa motivate Arjuna to kill his own kith and kins? It was definitely harmful for the country. The unequalled warriors like Bhīṣma, Droṇa etc., died. O! what a horrible loss of lives and properties! Had they all been alive, such a degrading fall of Hindus would not have happened".

"Śivā, Lord Kṛṣṇa was an expert politician. He did know that these warriors were very able and useful for the country. But suppose if Pāṇḍavas would have accepted their defeat then what would have been the result. Duryodhana would have continued to be the supreme ruler—and then what would have happened? Either the public must have dethroned him or the entire nation would have become irreligious. The Lord could not have tolerated the supremacy of irreligion. Moreover, had *Mahābhārata* not taken place, the seed of animosity would have continued—God knows for how many generations."

"Very well Dādā Jī, the Lord was equally proficient in *Yoga* and politics both. In our country and society politics also is a part of *Dharma*. Mother told me that the Lord recommended even *Hiṁsā* (killing) to uproot irreligion if and when necessary. She also told that when *Dharma* is in danger then one should not bother about his personal comfort."

"Yes Śivā, you are right. This is the divine instruction to remain equal in pain and pleasure."

*　　　　　　*　　　　　　*

A very scorching sun. The burning summer. Midday time.

One happens to find only occasionally a tree that too after a considerable distance. Only the expansion of a desert-like condition. A few villages scattered here and there. A gush of hot wind was felt as if burning the body. At such an odd hour only two persons are going on some stately errand. One is the Chatrapati Śivājī Mahārāja, a young boy of thirteen or so and the other is his guardian Dādā Jī Koṇḍadeva.

After covering some distance a river came with a *Nīma* tree at one side and a temple and a *Pīpal* tree at the other. The temple in this deserted place must have been built for the convenience of travellers. Reaching the bank of the river Dādā Jī caressingly touched the body of Śivājī and he was startled. At that time Śivājī has such a high fever that ordinarily makes a person unconscious. He spread a blanket under the cool shed of *Nīma* tree and said—"O my boy, you have such a high fever and did not even tell me. Now take rest here. The body must be taken care of. You will be instrumental in protecting the *Hindū Dharma.*" Saying so he went to a nearby village to arrange for some food.

Śivājī was feeling extremely restless due to the fever. He could not get any sleep nor did the intensity of fever lessen. The entire body was aching due to the physical fatigue. He was in a bad condition.

Even then he was trying to keep his mind calm and cool. After a little while he started analysing the prevailing condition in the country and degeneration of Hindu society. And now he was completely forgetful about his physical illness.

* * *

On the other side of the river there came a person—a tall and healthy with impressive personality. He undressed, had a dip in the river went to the temple, offered water and *Bilvapatra* to Lord Śiva and then sat in meditation.

Drip, drip, drip. He opened his eyes. He saw that the idol was drenched with cow-blood. There was blood everywhere

around the divine image. He jumped to his feet in a flurry. Came out with a jug in his hand. He saw a cow in two pieces, the blood gushing out and making the ground red. O! what a horrible scene. The *Brāhmaṇa* turned his face in a disgust. Again took bath in the river and washed the blood-stains from the idol and the temple. But he did not even stare at the ruffian and then again he sat for meditation.

Again the same horrifying scene, the same blood. This time there was some flesh also. The *Pujārī* again removed the flesh and washed the temple and had a glance at the ruffian who was bursting into laughter to make that *Pujārī* feel how helpless he was. He was cutting the body with the knife into small pieces. That *Pujārī* again cleaned everything and absorbed himself in his *Pūjā*.

O! *Ahimsā* also crossed its limit. No befitting reply to the atrocious ghastly act. Repetition of the same action.

* * *

"How do they dare to kill Hindus. How is it so that they abduct the mothers and sisters of Hindus like ordinary luxury items. O! How demoralised Hindus have become. They are witnessing their religion being outraged and are witnessing it all helplessly without concern. Even in that poor physical condition a storm had arisen in the heart of Śivājī. All of a sudden he happened to see the ruffian laughing at the *Pujārī* and the carcass of a cow laying down. His hands were red. And the Hindu? Perhaps he might have lost his religious sensitiveness.

Śivājī was now a live volcano. His face reddened. Eyes were ejecting flames. He could not see the scene. A moment before he was even unable to stand but now he sprang up. Threw away the clothings. Only a dagger in his loin cloth. He jumped into the river crossed it and rushed towards the ruffian who was again going to the temple with flesh in his hand. He was laughing quite unaware of his fast approaching death.

Śivājī sprang like lion overpowered him and stabbed right into his heart. A terrible scream followed by a silent calmness.

Pujārī was perplexed. He raised his hand perhaps to bless the new comer but Śivājī rebuked him. He became silent. Śivājī went on—"You pretentious wretched *Brāhmaṇa*, didn't you have strength enough to chastise or even kill this bloody ruffian? Is your conscience so dead that you could not raise your hand against an irreligious man? What do you think of the Lord. Is he as impotent as you seem to be? The Lord has always inspired to hold weapons in order to protect religion. Don't you know that Lord Rāma annihilated the entire ogre race to protect the *Dharma?* What for did Lord Kṛṣṇa organise *Mahābhārata* war and taught *Gītā?* You must realise that it is high time that every Hindu must have sword in his hand. You could not protect even a cow the symbol of your *Dharma*. If you could not kill the desperadoes, at least you could have died in the process of protecting the cow. I am ashamed while talking to you. Get out of my sight."

The ashamed *Pujārī* went on his way. Śivājī was completely broken with fever and fatigue. Apprehending Dādājī's rebuke, he crossed the river and lay down on the bed. He felt as if he would kill all the desperadoes.

After some time Dādājī came. Seeing his clothes drenched he looked at him questioningly. Śivājī narrated what happend during his absence. Dādājī Koṇḍadeva felt puffed up with pride and he paid all encomiums to Śivājī. The gist of what he said to Śivājī is that the *Ahiṁsā* can uplift only a pious person. So long as there are goblins and ogres in the world no nation can keep alive without *Hiṁsā*. Killing desperadoes is the real *Ahiṁsā*.

Vegetarian Way More Economic

—Panna Lall Mundhra

It is no less shocking to learn from the press that the government is planning to import about 2 Mt of wheat, to meet the immediate requirement of the deficit of food grains in the country. In locating the real problem creating area the present government did nothing new than passing the fault on the head of the traders.

The fact remains, that if the country is facing the shortage of wheat or for that purpose any other cereal, it is largely because of the Poultry and Animal Rearing For Slaughter industry. The consumption of Cereals by these industries is about 40 Mt. per year and they produce out of 40 Mt. food grains about 4 Mt. of Meat, Chicken and Egg, as it takes about 10 Kgs. of Cereals to produce 1 Kg. of Meat or Chicken. And these Chickens, Meat and Eggs meet the requirement of 40 Million Upper Middle Class people, who can afford to purchase them. Whereas 40 Mt. of Food Grains could meet the requirement of 400 Million people of the Country.

It is further unfortunate that in the states, where the Rice or Cereals are being offered at subsidised rates say Rice at the rate of Rs. 2.00 per Kg. the poultry industry is prospering, and these states virtually supply chickens, Eggs and Meat throughout the country. One wonders, whether subsidised foodgrains are for poors or indirectly for Poultry and Animal Rearing for Slaughter Industry.

It is therefore if the present government want to avoid

scandalous decision and take a logical decision, which will help the health of people and wealth of the nation, then it should immediately ban the supply of Cereals to Poultry and Meat Industry. Once this 40 Mt. Cereals yearly is saved, the country shall not only meet the requirement of foodgrains of the nation and that too at lower prices, but shall also be able to export Foodgrains to earn ample foreign exchange, and this amount of foreign exchange shall be much bigger than the amount being earned at present by exporting meat and eggs.

Yes, the government shall lose a little revenue on medicines, because once the supply of Eggs and Meat is reduced the medical bill of the people shall come down, but then this loss shall be gainfully adjusted against the saving of subsidy on Cereals.

I am sure the government or the judiciary in the interest of the people of the country shall put immediate ban on the supply of Cereals to the Industry.

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Often when we get sick or experience some crisis in our lives, we feel helpless and want to give up. But don't you know that facing and overcoming problems is what life is all about? That is why we are here—not to whine or despair, but to accept what comes to us and use it as a means to bring us into a closer relationship with God. When adversity strikes, do not think it is because God has forsaken you. Nonsense! If in those moments of trial you turn to Him in childlike trust, you will find Him with you, perhaps even more tangibly than He ever was during the good times in life.

—*Self-Realization*

The Elixir

"In the body itself there is everything; the spiritual region, the heavenly plateaus and the material planes.

In the body dwells the Lord Supreme who nourishes all.

In the body lives the formless, the inconceivable, beyond the human ken.

Those who have material eyes only, seek Him in vain, in outward things.

In the body itself there are priceless jewels of Divinity.

In the body there are all the material realms and planes.

In the body is the treasure of the holy sound, reached only through meditation on the word of the Master.

In the body are all the gods: the Brahmā, the Viṣṇu and the Śiva, and the whole creation itself."

—*Guru Nānaka*

"O Kabīra, there is a great mystery in the repetition of the Lord's name and one must try to discover the same:

For many repeat that name, without any fruit.

But others with wondrous results."

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"The *Guru* has shown me the channels through which the mind stuff flows out,

By stopping the outgoing faculties, I hear the melodies of the Eternal Song."

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"Fix thy soul on the remembrance of the Lord and lock thy tongue,

Closing down all the outer doors, peep thou within."

—*Kabīra*

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"Whosoever keeps under control his ten senses,

He shall see the light of god dawn within him."

—*Guru Arjan Deva*

—*Compiled by* G. J. Motwani

Chemistry in Ancient India

—*Ishwara Prasad A.*

Chemistry is a major branch of science extensive in scope. It is essentially concerned with the composition and structure of matter and uses both analytical and synthetical methods. Vast expansion of chemical knowledge has taken place all through history and particularly in recent times largely due to its application to the primary needs of man. Chemistry has a broad view in modern times while it was restricted to a particular extent in ancient times. It appears to have originated and developed as a handmaid of *Āyurveda*.

In India science was not dissociated from Philosophy and they had close inter-action even from remote times. Knowledge in the absolute sense is most ancient so is chemistry as a science. We find the same in case of *Āyurveda* also. Now students of *Āyurveda* study *Padārtha Vijñāna* which is nothing but extraction of Philosophical part present in ancient Āyurvedic texts. Ancient chemistry is called Alchemy. Alchemy is the science of the soul and is also inextricably bound in certain of its aspects to the early history of chemistry. Alchemy is one of the principal traditional cosmological sciences for thousands of years before the dawn of recorded history and systematised into a formulated science in Alexandriya, China & India at least two thousand years ago. According to S. Mahdihassan Alchemy is a living fossil. Prof. Gaubard called Astrology and alchemy two fossil sciences.

Rasa means mercury and *Ayana* means way. Thus *Rasāyana* means way to mercury.

Alchemy started as geriatrics though conceived as the art of rejuvenation. Alchemists hoped to discover remedy for the infirmity of old age but it resulted in the discovery of the property of so many herbs. In Indian Alchemy the word *Rasāyana* specifies an agent changing a base metal into gold. Now there is no authentic record that gold was ever made.

The *Ṛgveda Saṁhitā,* the earliest literary composition of this period, mentions the use of metals including gold. The vedic people believed that gold possessed supernatural powers. The *Atharva Veda* even speaks of gold as conferring long life on one who wears it. The metal workers of the vedic period, doubtless, possessed the technical knowledge of using copper and bronze. The vedic people were well aware of the fermented drinks and the methods of fermentation.

Some of the *Purāṇas* contain information about various salts, wines and some mineral substances, cosmetics, *Garuda Purāṇa* states about *Ariṣṭa* of *Karanja Sauvīra* type of wine. Five kinds of salts mentioned in the *Garuda Purāṇa* are *Sauvarcala, Saindhava, Viḍaṅga Audbhida, Sāmudra.* In *Garuda Purāṇa* sugar is called *Śarkarā, Sitā Sitopala, Matsyandi.* Preparation of sugar molasses is not found. *Purāṇas* do not state any process of fermentation or distillation.

An important aspect that should not go unnoticed from the point of view of Indian Alchemy is that in the *'Artha Śāstra'* of Kautilya, there are descriptions of *Rasapāka* and *Rasaviddha.* There we can find an account of juices. The *Arthaśāstra* gives a quantitative account of the oil. The test also has classifications such as sour, fruit juices liquids, spices, vegitables etc., obviously based on their manifest chemical characteristics. In *Arthaśāstra Prakaraṇa Ākara Karmāṅta Pravartanam e*xplains about metallurgy.

Metals like gold, silver and copper had been in use in earlier chalcolithic times over large parts of India in

the Gangetic valley. Excavations at Mohenjodaro, Harappa, Channadaro, Lothal and other Harappan sites reveal that those inhabitants were familiar with iron, were well acquainted with other metals like copper, bronze, tin, gold, silver, lead and antimony. Those were used for the manufacture of utensils, implements, weapons etc. Excavations at Brahmagiri and Chandravalli have uncovered specimens of painted slip and salt-gazed handmade pottery of the stone age.

In the writings of the medical schools of ancient India originating from Caraka and Suśruta references were often found to chemical composition and decomposition by more or less crude process of calcination, distillation, sublimation, steaming fixation etc. Chemistry of digestion has been elaborately discussed in the *Caraka Saṁhitā* but a more detailed discussion is found in a medical treatise of a much later date, the *Aṣṭāṅga Hṛdaya Saṁhitā* of Vāgbhaṭa.

A treatise *Rasaratna Samuccaya* entirely deals with chemistry. Here description about metallurgy is found. Kinds of ores of iron, qualities of some ores, preparation of various *Yantras* are found. How laboratory should be constructed; architecture of that laboratory are also described.

The uses of dyes like Indigo, lac, turmeric, resin and red ochre was known to the ancient Indians. Varāhamihira in his *Bṛhat Saṁhitā* refers to mordants like alum and sulphate of iron for the fixing of dyes on textile fabrics. The Ajanta cave paintings, (5th century A.D.) to the use of colouring materials also indicate ancient technology.

A seven-foot high pure copper statue of Buddha belonging to the fifth century A.D. is now present in Bermingham Museums. Here layers are cast over by the 'Cire perdue' process.

Chemical knowledge in the world originated in India.

It spreads from east to west. We can get literary evidences in Kautilya's *Arthaśāstra.* It gives much and chronological knowledge about chemistry.

In Europe chemistry was found to be popular only in seventeenth century, but colonisation and changes in the political scenario made it popular worldwide.

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एह्येहीति तमाहुतयः सुवर्चसः
सूर्यस्य रश्मिभिर्यजमानं वहन्ति।
प्रियां वाचमभिवदन्त्योऽर्चयन्त्य
एष वः पुण्यः सुकृतो ब्रह्मलोकः॥

"Saying, "Come, come," uttering pleasing words such as, "This is your well-earned, virtuous path which leads to heaven," and offering him adoration, the scintillating oblations carry the sacrificer along the rays of the sun."

—*Muṇḍaka Upaniṣad* (I. 2. 6)

What is the state of a man who is in the world but is free from its attachments? He is like a lotus-leaf in water, or like a mud fish in the marsh. Neither of these is polluted by the element in which it lives. The water wets not the leaf, nor does the mud stain the glossy coat of the fish.

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

To ignore the cultivation of God-consciousness through being overwhelmed with material duties is man's common error. To be inactive, on the other hand with the pretense of being spiritual is dangerous self-deceit.

—*Paramahansa Yogananda*

Truth is the foundation of all merit and virtue.

—*Tulasidasa*

Union with God

—*Swami Sivananda*

The goal of life is Self-realisation or union with God. If you realize God you are rich, you have enough, you are wise, you are all-powerful. God is certainly knowable and realisable in and through human life. To know and to feel the oneness of God is to be one with God.

God-realization alone can put an end to the wheel of birth and death with its concommitant evils such as birth, growth, disease, death, sorrow, pain, etc. Eternal happiness can be had only in God. That is the reason why sages and saints and scriptures make a very emphatic statement and lay great stress on the importance and necessity of God-realization.

Bhakti or devotion can help one in the attainment of this God-realization. *Bhakti* can bring one face to face with God and provide the nectar of God-consciousness which alone is the aim of human life and human endeavour.

In the *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* it is said—"Not by arguments, not by extreme intelligence, not by the voracious and wide study of scriptures will you reach God. You can reach Him by sincere *Sādhanā* or spiritual practices."

People worship God differently, but He is always one. The oneness of God is acknowledged by all the schools of mysticism. But, just as when at home you wear a towel only and when you come out you put on a collar, tie, coat, etc., even so God is without attributes when He is alone,

and when He manifests Himself He puts on these various illusory dresses of names and forms and becomes *Saguṇa Brahma* (with attributes) for the sake of pious meditation of *Bhaktas*. God has no attributes in the ultimate analysis, but all positive attributes are associated with Him so that man may realise Him through the means of all that is positive, virtuous, noble and everlasting. How kind He is! He is the ocean of mercy and love.

The wise do not regard God as a person. Truth is God for them, love is God for them; but without some sort of association, meditation on God cannot be effective. Hence there are many means which portray Him in various ways that help one to reach Him. Image-worship is a stepping stone to worship of the Infinite. The difference of conception and approach to God is due to historical and traditional causes, and also due to temperamental diversity.

The way to God is through the heart. God-realisation is achieved through perfection of the lower nature and its transmutation into higher divine nature. God can be realised through faith, devotion and meditation. Only a *Bhakta* or a devotee can have the vision of God. God reveals Himself in the form in which the devotee loves Him most. The devotion of the *Bhakta* and the intensity of his concentration on a particular form cause its materialisation either in dream, or in meditation or even while awake.

There are no aliens in the dominion of God. All are equal to Him. He cannot be comprehended, but can be realised. Within the temple of your own heart is the source of life, wisdom, bliss, peace and joy; within you is hidden God, the mysterious Almighty One.

God is your sole refuge, benefactor, and supreme master. God is the highest, and to Him we all must return. God dwells within you. Seek Him now. He is the ultimate

Existence, or the supreme *Sat*. He is beginningless. He is the source or origin for the universe. He is the destroyer of ignorance of men or darkness of *Saṁsāra* (worldly existence). In Him the wheel of *Saṁsāra* revolves. Take refuge in Him. Utter with intense feeling and sincerity, "O God! I surrender myself at Thy lotus feet." You will then get descent of His Grace.

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People are too eager to see the trees planted by them fructify and to eat the fruits thereof. This implies lack of faith and selfishness. Jesus, Nānaka and some others made their bodies the humble manure of trees which bore fruit many generations after them.

—*Swami Rama Tirtha*

To meet God at the end of the trail is a great consolation. It does not matter whether we go through trials or disappointments in life if at last we all meet Him. We belong to Him, and in Him we will find the fulfilment of all our dreams. So we must never be discouraged no matter how life treats us. Repeat with me: "Lord, Thy joy alone is mine; that only is mine."

—*Self-Realization*

It matters not if you live the life of a householder, only you must fix your mind on God. Do your work with one hand, and hold the feet of the Lord with the other. When you have no work in the world to do hold His feet fast to your heart with both your hands.

—*Sri Ramakrishna*

Vedānta and an Untouchable

--*T. N. Sethumadhavan*

Background:

The history books of every country often contain black pages describing certain negative values prevalent in human society. Indian history is no exception. India gave to the world the crest jewel of philosophy, *Adwaita Vedānta,* or Philosophy of Non-dualism which enunciated primary unity of all existence. But this high philosophy was never practised in the country of its origin which thus became the home of the worst type of social evil called untouchability.

The practice of untouchability created different classes of people called the outcastes and the higher castes in Indian society. The segregated class came to be known as untouchables or *Harijanas.* The other sections of the population were unapproachable by and unseeable to them. Such segmentation was made neither on any rational ground nor on any scriptural authority. The distinction among the people as higher and lower led to various forms of social tension which are witnessed even at present after several centuries from its origin.

Given this gloomy background a person with the stigma of untouchability could hardly be expected to dare speak the words of *Vedānta* and that too to a person of a higher caste and the author of non-dualistic philosophy. But this is what exactly happened in the life of Śrī Ādi Śaṅkarācārya.

Adwaita Philosophy:

The essence of Śaṅkara's non-dualistic philosophy is that

Brahman—the Absolute, alone is real; this world is unreal and the *Jīva* or the individual soul is not different from the *Brahman*. It emphasised that *Brahman* is One only and the whole Universe is the expression of that only One and the apparent plurality of the world of objects is due to ignorance.

Śaṅkara and the Untouchable:

One summer noon at Varanasi Śrī Śaṅkara after taking a bath in the holy *Gaṅgā* was proceeding towards the temple of Lord Viśwanātha alongwith his disciples. The Great *Ācārya* saw an outcaste, a *Cāṇḍāla,* coming alongwith his dogs in his way. He told the *Cāṇḍāla* 'get away, get away—move away, move away'.

These innocent looking remarks led to an unexpected questioning from the *Cāṇḍāla* and caused—Śaṅkara to give out to the world an immortal poem entitled *'Manīṣā Pañcakam'* which elaborated the Vedantic ideas and brought into focus that even a person belonging to a low caste could rekindle the light of wisdom in the greatest among the great teachers.

Śrī Śaṅkara's encounter and dialogue with an untouchable on the streets of Varanasi was of immense significance because when it happened the evil of untouchability in our country was reigning supreme.

Issues Raised by the Untouchable:

The *Cāṇḍāla* asked Śaṅkara:

1. By saying 'Move away, Move away' do you wish to move matter from matter or you mean to separate Spirit from the Spirit? You have established that the Absolute is everywhere—in you and me—and yet you want me to get away from you as if I were different.

Is it this body, built up of food, that you wish to keep at a distance from that body which is also built up of food? Or do you wish to separate Pure Awareness which is present here from the same Awareness present there?

2. Does it make any difference to the sun when it is reflected in the waters of Gaṅgā or in the dirty waters of the cesspools in the streets of *Cāṇḍālas?* Is there any difference in the space as such, be it in a golden pot or in a mud pot? In the self-existing ocean of Blissful Consciousness, in the inner Self, where there are no waves of agitating thoughts, how can there be this great delusory distinction—this is a Brahmin and this is an untouchable?

Śaṅkara's Response:

These words of the *Cāṇḍāla* struck the *Sadguru* with astonishment. As a teacher of *Adwaita* propagating the one Infinite Self in all, he immediately recognised that the *Cāṇḍāla* taught him his own philosophy correctly.

He then and there composed the five verses entitled *Manīṣā Pañcakam'* reiterating that eventhough a *Cāṇḍāla,* he having exhibited clear perception of the *Brahman,* is indeed the *Guru* of the *Jagadguru.*

In these verses which expound the wisdom of the *Mahāvākyas* declared in the four *Vedas,* Śaṅkara not only responded to his critique but also sent a timeless and universal message that distinctions based upon social, moral, ethical and other similar considerations have no relevance in the Upaniṣadic teachings.

Synopsis of *Manīṣā Pañcakam:*

Śaṅkara proclaims in his poem that it is his firm conviction that he alone is his *Guru,* be he a *Cāṇḍāla,* be he a Brahmin who:

1. has realised that he is not the Seen, but that he is the one Consciousness that illumines all experiences during the waking, dream and deep sleep states, the one Consciousness that is the sole witness of the entire play of the Universe, the one Consciousness which is the very life spark in all forms—from the Creator down to the ant. (This verse elucidates the *Mahāvākya 'Prajñānaṁ Brahma'*—Consciousness is *Brahman).*

2. in his direct experience of the Supreme, has understood that the entire Universe is merely a play of the Pure Consciousness, projected by his ignorance, expressed in the three moods of his mind, while he himself is that *Brahman*. (This verse elucidates the *Mahāvākya 'Ahaṁ Brahma Asmi'*—I am *Brahman,* the one who has awakened from his limited sense of ego and realised the Supreme).

3. reflecting upon the fact that this world of change is permanently in a state of flux, quietens his mind devoid of all disturbing thoughts and constantly contemplates upon *Brahman,* has burnt up all his past and future residual *Vāsanās* in the fire of Pure Consciousness, has offered his body to live through and exhaust its present destiny. (This verse elucidates the *Mahāvākya—'Tat Twaṁ Asi'*—That Thou Art).

4. with his mind made completely tranquil and meditates upon That which expresses itself as 'I', the subjective individuality in all creatures—plant, animal, human etc. That by whose light body, mind and senses are all enlivened to activity, eventhough by themselves they are inert and insentient, That which illumines everything as sun from behind a bank of clouds. (This verse elucidates the *Mahāvākya 'Ayamātmā Brahma'*—This Self in me is the Infinite Reality).

Having thus given the gist of the entire *Adwaita Vedānta* based on the four *Mahāvākyas* Śrī Śaṅkara concludes by saying that during the moments of quietude a *Yogī's* mind gains that Ocean of Bliss, the *Brahman,* the Reality. He emphasises that the one who dissolved his individual intellect in the eternal Ocean of Bliss is not only a knower of *Brahman* but *Brahman* Himself. A *Yogī* of this status is worshipped even by the King of Gods. Such a God-man on the earth is "my *Guru*—sole guide and light—be he an outcaste, be he a Brahmin—this is my firm conviction—*Manīṣā Mama*" declares Ādi Śaṅkara.

Mythological Twist:

The mythological depiction of the incident which to some extent clouds its real message says that Lord Śiva Himself with Pārvatī appeared before Śaṅkara in the forms of an Untouchable and his wife to test the depth of Śrī Śaṅkara's spiritual understanding. Swāmī Raṅganāthānandajī Mahārāja of Śrī Rāmakṛṣṇa Mission opines that if the myth is removed from the story it is one of the most poignant human stories and a memorable incident in Śrī Śaṅkara's life.

Conclusion:

To summarise, the five verses of Ādi Śaṅkara's *Manīṣā Pañcakam* convey that the body is not to be confused with the Self or Consciousness and that anyone who exhibited the awareness of the Reality was indeed the *Guru* and worthy of the highest respect irrespective of whether he was an outcaste or a Brahmin by birth. Śrī Śaṅkara was of the firm view that there were no distinctions in the Pure Consciousness, the *Brahman*.

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अथ य एषोऽन्तरक्षिणि पुरुषो दृश्यते सैवर्क् तत्साम तदुक्थं तद्यजुस्तद्ब्रह्म तस्यैतस्य तदेव रूपं यावमुष्य यदमुष्य रूपं गेष्णौ तौ गेष्णौ यन्नाम तन्नाम।

"Then, this person that is seen in the eye, that indeed is *Ṛk*, that is *Sāma*, that is *Uktham*, that is *Yajus*, that is *Brahma*. The appearance of this one (that is in the eye) is the same as of that one (in the sun). Those which are the finger-joints of that one, they are of this one. The name of this one is the same as that one."

—*Chāndogya Upaniṣad* (I. 7. 5)

No man can serve two masters: For either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

—*Christ*

The Fallacy of Blaming God for One's Problems

Because people have lost sight of the power of true religion, many no longer have much interest in the churches—and many have no interest even in God: "How can I believe in God when I see so much suffering in the world! If God exists, why does He permit all these sufferings, which I and all mankind must endure?"

This is a fallacy in man's thinking: for everything detrimental that happens to him he wants to blame God—or if not God, then someone else. This is psychological and spiritual immaturity. When you go to a good psychiatrist, he will encourage you to place the responsibility for overcoming your troubles on yourself, not others. One of the most common early signs of mental illness is when an individual begins to think that everybody is persecuting him: "I am all right; 'they are the cause of my problems!"

Neither God nor anyone else has caused the difficulties we face in life; if you think so, you have not understood the great truth of the law of *Karma,* cause and effect. You are the way you are because you have behaved in a certain way, and the way you behaved determines the kinds of fruits you are reaping in your present circumstance. A seed produces its own kind. An apple seed does not produce a carrot; it produces an apple. In the same way, wrong thoughts produce wrong actions; and wrong actions bring forth a wrong result. It cannot be otherwise. So you can forever continue to blame your problems on God, or your

parents, or your environment, but that will not remove your troubles. It is like trying to remove darkness by beating at it with a stick. You may do that through all eternity, but it will never drive darkness away. The only way you can remove darkness is to bring in the light. If people only knew that this is what religion is truly about, there would be a spiritual renaissance in the world.

—*Self-Realization*

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वेदाहमेतं पुरुषं महान्त-
मादित्यवर्णं तमसः परस्तात्।
तमेव विदित्वाऽतिमृत्युमेति
नान्यः पन्था विद्यतेऽयनाय॥

"I know this great person who is resplendent like the sun and is beyond darkness. By knowing Him alone one transcends death; there is no other path to go by."

—*Śvetāśvatara Upaniṣad* (III.8)

Your peace is to be guarded above everything else. If you can retain your inner peace, therein lies your supreme victory. No matter how you are situated in life, never feel justified in losing your peace. When that is gone and you cannot think clearly, you have lost the battle. If you never lose your peace, you will find you are always victorious, no matter.

—*Self-Realization*

यथाचारं यथाशास्त्रं यथाचित्तं यथास्थितम्।
व्यवहारमुपादत्ते यः स आर्य इति स्मृतः॥

"One who acts according to the traditional norms of the conduct, acts as prescribed in the scriptures, acts as he thinks to be proper and as demanded by the occasion may be called as *Ārya*."

—*Yogavāsiṣṭha*

Thus Spake Swāmī Nigamānanda Paramahaṁsa

(1) True foundation of religion is the grand combination of *Jñāna* and *Bhakti,* knowledge and devotion.

(2) The highest ambition in one's life should be God-realization.

(3) Domestic happiness is nothing but illusion and having been overpowered with this illusion man forgets God who is the embodiment of real happiness.

(4) Without feeling aggrieved for your present circumstances, tender your gratefulness to God, the Almighty.

(5) If one hankers after external things, the mind will never become introvert, nor will there be revelation of the Self.

(6) This world is no place for luxury and enjoyment. This is a place to perform duty.

(7) Desires are the fetters. Do not cherish any other desire in your heart excepting the lotus feet of the Lord.

(8) This world is built of wants and as such one should not hope for complete happiness and peace.

(9) Mother, wife and daughter are but separate manifestations of the one universal mother and life of a woman is complete in her motherhood.

(10) When the heart of a woman is devoid of lustful desire and when it becomes pure and full of love, as in the case of mother, it is in such a heart that the Divine Mother manifests Herself.

The Lost Empire

Although all the systems agree so far that we had the empire, and that we have lost it, they give us varied advice as to how to regain it. One says that you must perform certain ceremonies, pay certain sums of money to certain idols, eat certain sorts of food, live in a peculiar fashion to regain that empire. Another says that if you weep and prostrate yourselves and ask pardon of some Being beyond nature, you will regain that empire. Again, another says if you love such a Being with all your heart, you will regain that empire. All this varied advice is in the *Upaniṣads*. As I go on, you will find it so. But the last and the greatest counsel is that you need not weep at all. You need not go through all these ceremonies, and need not take any notice of how to regain your empire, because you never lost it. Why should you go to seek for what you never lost? You are pure already, you are free already. If you think you are free, free you are this moment, and if you think you are bound, bound you will be. This is a very bold statement, and as I told you at the beginning of this course, I shall have to speak to you very boldly. It may frighten you now, but when you think over it, and realise it in your own life, then you will come to know that what I say is true. For, supposing that freedom is not your nature, by no manner or means can you become free. Supposing you were free and in some way you lost that freedom, that shows that you were not free to begin with. Had you been free, what could have made you lose it? The independent can never be made dependent if it is really dependent, its independence was a hallucination.

—*Swāmī Vivekānanda*

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The Glory of Śrī Rādhā

Goddess Rādhā is called the highest goddess because She is identical with Śrī Kṛṣṇa (the Supreme Deity); She is just the same as Lakṣmī (the consort of Lord Viṣṇu). She is the joy of Śrī Kṛṣṇa personified; hence, Nārada! She is called *Hlādinī* (Enrapturing Potency) by the wise......She is Mahālakṣmī Herself, while Śrī Kṛṣṇa is none other than Lord Nārāyaṇa. There is not the least difference between the two, O best of sages. She is the same as Durgā, while Śrī Kṛṣṇa is Rudra Himself. Śrī Rādhā is identical with Sāvitrī, whereas Śrī Kṛṣṇa is one with *Brahmā*. In short, nothing exists aprat from them. The entire universe made up of animate and inanimate creation is pervaded by Śrī Rādhā and Śrī Kṛṣṇa. In this way look upon all, O Nārada, as their manifestation. Should I proceed to enumerate their manifestations, I shall not be able to do so even in millions of years.

(*Padmapurāṇa, Pātāla-Khaṇḍa* LXXXI. 53—58)